

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ScholarWorks @ UTRGV

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers -
Newsletters

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers

6-27-1974

Newsletter - 1974-06-27

E. De la Garza

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/kikadelagarzanews>



Part of the [State and Local Government Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Newsletters, UTRGV Digital Library, The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers at ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Newsletters by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

FROM: Kika de la Garza

WASHINGTON, D C -- A report I recently obtained points up the economic significance to South Texas of Social Security benefits. Every month thousands of our elderly and disabled workers and their survivors receive millions of dollars in cash benefits. The report gives the number of beneficiaries and monthly payments to them as of the end of December 1973. Here is a county-by-county breakdown:

Brooks County, 1205 persons received \$124,000; Cameron, 20,710 beneficiaries received \$1,256,000; Duval, 2,170 and \$214,000; Hidalgo, 25,305 and \$2,545,000; Jim Hogg, 800 and \$74,000; Jim Wells, 4,105 and \$456,000; Kenedy, 80 and \$9,000; Kleberg, 2,840 and \$332,000; Live Oak, 1,125 and \$131,000; McMullen, 130 and \$17,000; Starr, 2,425 and \$191,000; Willacy, 2,115 and \$205,000; Zapata, 935 and \$89,000.

Parts of Bee and Karnes Counties are included in the 15th Congressional District. In Bee County, 2,810 beneficiaries received total payments of \$312,000 last December and in Karnes County 2,530 received \$255,000.

* * *

PAYMENTS INCREASED -- Social Security benefit payments have been raised this year -- by seven percent in April with another increase of four percent to be made in July. The bill we passed in Congress will not raise the Social Security tax rate of 5.85 percent. The base from which taxes are paid will be increased from \$10,800 to \$13,200, which means that persons earning less than \$10,800 will not have to pay more.

This represents an effort to help the aged with a reasonable cost of living increase without placing an added tax burden on younger working people. I supported the measure.

* * *

SOME PROBLEMS -- There is no doubt that Social Security is here to stay. For millions of Americans -- including, as reported above, many people in South Texas -- it is the one source of income they can count on in old age or in the event of disability. The public relies on the system, and rightly so. There is an evident need, however, to make some basic decisions affecting the long-term future of the program.

Population experts say that in the foreseeable future the proportion of active workers will decline with relation to retired persons. This means fewer people, proportionately, will be taxed to pay Social Security benefits to more beneficiaries. Thought must be given to the limit of public tolerance for the payroll deduction, especially among younger workers facing many years of such payment before retirement.

These and other problems must be worked out. I will continue to do my best to make whatever contribution I can make toward solving them so that older people can be spared the rigors of poverty and younger workers the burden of excessive taxation.

* * *

TOURISM AND FUEL -- South Texans hardly need to be reminded of the importance of tourism to our area. In this connection, a current report by the Special Travel Industry Council on Energy Conservation, sponsored by a number of organizations concerned with travel, is of special interest. The report puts forward facts and figures to show that tourism is entitled to equal treatment and consideration in the matter of apportioning our energy supplies. This is what I have been urging on the Federal Energy Office all along.

A significant point is that the tourism industry consists predominantly of small businesses, which are generally least able to withstand the severe economic dislocation that would result from a heavy reduction of gasoline available for travel. More than 90 percent of the establishments in the commercial lodging, food service, travel arrangement, and gasoline service station segments of the industry are classified as small businesses.

Tourism is a major U S industry. Its machinery, notably the means of travel, must be kept running. That is the conclusion of the Special Travel Industry Council, and I agree wholeheartedly.

* * *

COMFORT AT REFUGE -- According to information I received from the Department of the Interior, a contract has been let for the construction of a comfort station, utilities, and related facilities at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The facilities will be of the same type as those at the Santa Anna Wildlife Refuge.

* * *

HOME GARDENING -- The editor of an agricultural newsletter I receive advocates "at least one tomato plant or window box vegetable in every city dwelling as a self-education in agriculture." It sounds like a good idea. A mini-gardener may come to have a better understanding of problems the farmer faces every day. It's not a bad idea for rural areas and small towns -- every kid should have a small vegetable garden.

Incidentally, the House Ways and Means Committee has tentatively adopted a proposal to give a seven percent investment credit each year, applying to the first \$100 of purchases, for home gardening tools and equipment. The idea is to encourage more home gardening.

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME -- Visiting my office from home this past week were Mr Robert Dunkin and Ms Janet Sullivan, both of Harlingen.

* * *